N°18

A

SERMON

Preach'd to the

NATIVES

OF THE

County of *WARWICK*,

AND

City of *COVENTRY*,

IN THE

Church of St. *Mary Le Bow*, *London*,

November 14th. 1695.

By *THO. WHITE*, Preacher at *Stratford Le Bow* in *Middlesex*, and Prebendary of *Litchfield*.

LONDON,

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TO

Mr. Ralph Palmer.
Mr. William Edwards.
Mr. Thomas Burnivill.
Mr. William Hegg.
Mr. Thomas Kirkum.
Mr. Adam Morroll.
Mr. Richard Morroll.
Mr. Samuel Knowles.

Stewards of the Warwickſhire *Feaſt.*

Gentlemen,

IT's uſual for the Printing of a Sermon, to plead the Importunity of ſome or other, as if that muſt atone for all its Weakneſſes and Defects.

I wave this as an old faſhion'd Apology and out of Date.

Beſides

Besides, I would not be so Unkind to my Country-Men, if I were guilty of a Fault, to make them Accessaries, and draw them into a Participation of my Guilt.

I am very well satisfied no Man can think Meaner of this Undertaking than he who undertook it; and if I have done neither Honour nor Service to your Native Country, yet I meant so well, and intended it, I would certainly have done it if I could. I am,

GENTLEMEN,

Your Obliged Servant
and Country-Man

THO. WHITE.

PSALM

PSALM lxxxvii. 5, 6.

And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her, and the most High shall establish her.

The Lord shall count it when he writes up the people, that this man was born in her.

WE are here assembl'd this Day, as for other good Ends and Purposes, so to celebrate the Country and Place of our Birth.

The Historian, indeed, when he describes any Place or Province, entertains us with the Commodiousness of the Situation, the Sweetness of the Air, the Temperature of the Clime, the Fertility of the Soil, the Variety and Abundance of all Things for the Necessities and Conveniency of Humane Life: But it looks Foreign to the Office of a Preacher, who considers not so much the good Qualities of a Place as the

the People; the Piety and Prudence, the Truth and Honesty, the Moderation and Peaceableness, the Charity and Usefulness of those that were born there.

The Holy Writer of this *Psalm*, whence I have borrow'd my Text, gives a high and honourable Character of *Zion* upon both Accounts, as well for the Excellency of the Place, as the Natives also.

First, She is extoll'd for her great Force
Verse 1. and impregnable Strength; *Her Foundation is in the holy Mountains.*

Her Situation likewise was so sweet and inviting, that the Almighty seems pleas'd
Verse 2. with the Prospect; for, *The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.*

Verse 3. *Glorious things are spoken of thee, thou City of God.*

Psal. 122. 1. She is call'd, *The house of the Lord*; the
132. 5, 14. *place of his rest*; *the habitation of the Mighty*
Psal. 48. 2. *God of Jacob*; *the city of the great King*; and, *the joy of the whole Earth.*

Glo-

Glorious are theſe Sayings, but greater, if poſſible, is that ſaid of her in my Text; That ſhe was the Birth-place of Saints, and the Children of God; *For of Zion it ſhall be ſaid, This and that man was born in her, and the moſt High ſhall eſtabliſh her.*

Theſe Words, I confeſs, properly and literally ſpeaking, deſcribe *Zion*, not for the Nation or City of the Natural, but the Place of a Spiritual Birth, where many were born to God, and made his Children by Adoption and Grace.

This the foregoing Words fully prove, where it's ſaid, *I'll make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me; Behold Philiſtia and Tyre, with Ethiopia; This man was born there*; That is, It ſhall be ſpoke to the Honour of theſe Barbarous Nations, who were Aliens to the *Hebrew* Commonwealth; without the Covenant, without the Promiſe, and without God in the World; that now they are incorporated in the Church, made Natives of *Zion*, Fellow-

Citizens with the Saints, and of the Houſhold of God.

It's uſual we may obſerve in ſacred Scripture, to mention with Reſpect the very Place and Inſtruments of a Man's Converſion to God from an evil Courſe of Life; nay, it is ſo Natural, that we can't but think well of thoſe who have been Inſtrumental to our Spiritual Good, ſo kind and civil to our Souls, as to reduce them from Error and Ignorance, Popular Miſtakes, and Prejudice to the Knowledge of God, and Eſtabliſhment in the Truth.

St. *Paul* ſpeaks great things of thoſe Inſtruments by whoſe Miniſtry ſome were born into the Heavenly Life; *How beautiful are the Feet of thoſe that preach the Goſpel of Chriſt, and bring glad tidings of good things?* Rom. 10. 15.

Nor were Perſons only, but Places likewiſe, in repute upon the ſame Account.

Jericho ſtands upon record in the *Goſpel of St. Luke*, for the Place where *Zacheus* the Publican was call'd by our Saviour, and of an Heir of Perdition, a Child of Wrath, was made a Son of *Abraham*.

Luke 19. 1.

Verſe 4.

Antioch

Antioch, once a Place of Note and Eminency, tho' now decay'd, yet lives in Apoſtolical Hiſtory, for the Chriſtning of the Diſciples, who were call'd *Chriſtians* firſt at *Antioch*, after the Cuſtom of the *Greeks*, who call'd the Sect by the Founder's Name. Acts 11.26

Thus I obſerve, that where we firſt receiv'd Religion and the Faith of the Goſpel, in a ſenſe is the Place of our Birth, as well as that where we firſt drew our Breath.

However, I ſhall conſider theſe Words in the largeſt Senſe they are capable of, as they denote the Nation and Province of our Natural Birth, as well as that where we were born into the Knowledge of, and Acquaintance with God; and then theſe two things they will offer to our Obſervation.

Firſt, That there is a great difference in Places as to the forming Men's Manners, and a right inſtitution of Life.

Second, That true worth and Goodneſs doth an Honour to a Country, and reflects a Reputation to the Place of one's Birth.

To each of these I shall speak briefly, and then end with something proper to the Occasion of our Meeting this Day.

I. *First*, That there is a difference in places as to the forming Men's Manners, and a right Institution of Life: *Of Zion it shall be said, this and that Man was born in her.*

The whole World is indeed a Divinity-School, where the Dominion and Government of God is learnt; *The invisible things of God being plainly seen by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead*; yet notwithstanding there are some Places and People more peculiarly interested in the Tuition of the Almighty.

Rom. 1.

Zion was illustrious above all the Regions of *Judæa*, all the Towns and Cities of *Gallilee*, for the Divine Oracles, whence Men were taught to Reverence and Fear the God of *Israel*.

Rahab and *Babylon*, *Tire* and *Æthiopia*, were eminent in the Records of Time for Wealthy and Populous Countries: But for all that, *in Jewry was God known, his Name*

was

was great in Iſrael, in Salem was his Tabernacle, and his dwelling in Zion. Pſal. 76. 1. 2.

In the great Towns and Cities of the *Jews*, were the Seats of the Prophets; here dwelt *Rabbi*'s and Expoſitors of the Law; here were erected the Schools of Religion and learning; here were their Synagogues and Houſes of Prayer; here their Altars and Places of Sacrifice.

So that the Natives had all the Advantages of inriching their Minds with Wiſdom, to make them uſeful in their Generations, and to procure them Favour with God and Man.

Such a mighty Opinion had the *Jews* conceiv'd of their great Towns and Cities, that they diſpis'd all inferior Places, in Competition with them, for Virtue and Wiſdom; they uſually, in diſdain, call'd ſuch as were not of their Stamp, *Terræ Populum*, The People of the Earth, or if you will take it in the *Phariſees* own Language, *John* 7. 49. *This people who knoweth not the Law are curſed.*

Philo Judæus in his Book concerning ſpecial and particular Laws, tells us that the

the *Hebrews* gave the Cities of the Priests, who profest the Law, preference to all others; yea, moreover, that the Towns of Sacrifice were held to be more Religious than any besides.

And it's easie enough to conceive, that Religion and Goodness should thrive most in those Places, where they have the Advantage to be recommended daily by Precept and Example, Custom and general Approbation.

Where shall we seek Wisdom? Where shall we find Understanding, but in the Schools of the Prophets? Where shall we find Devotion, if not in Synagogues and Houses of Prayer? Where shall we meet the Divine Presence, but between the Cherubins, the Place where his Honour dwells?

Thus in the Judgment of the *Jews*, Places of Religion and beneficial Converse, have a mighty Power in forming Mens Manners, and governing the Actions of ther Lives; yea, we find that they were so prejudic'd against those little Towns and Villages where were no Synagogues, and Places for Sacrifice, that they would not admit

mit any good Thing could be done in them, or any good Man come from them.

And this was one Reaſon (though not to be juſtified) our Bleſſed Saviour himſelf found ſo little Favour from his Country-Men, becauſe of the Obſcurity and Ignobleneſs of the Place of his Birth.

Hence came thoſe reproachful Reflections of the *Phariſees* and their Admirers. *Shall Chriſt come out of Galilee? Look and ſee; For out of Galilee ariſeth no Prophet.* John 7. 41, 52.

A Country ſo poor and deſpis'd, never yet ſent a Man forth endued with the Spirit of Prophecy, and now they believe it never would.

Nay, honeſt *Nathanael*, who for his Plainneſs and Simplicity, was ſo belov'd of our Saviour, that he gave him the Character of an *Iſraelite indeed*, and *without guile*; was notwithſtanding ſo prejudic'd againſt the City of our Bleſſed Lord; that when *Philip* invited him to ſee the Meſſiah, *Jeſus* of *Nazareth* the Son of *Joſeph*, he forthwith makes this Reply, *Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?* John 1. 47. John 1. 45. 46.

For to come from *Nazareth* was a Prover-

bial Kind of Saying for a Man that was uſeleſs, and good for nothing: eſpecially amongſt the Men of that Generation, who ador'd only the Pomp and Splendour of Riches, allowing few for Wiſe and Prudent beſides the rich and proſperous; nor any for Good, but ſuch as were very Great in the World.

Mat. 23. 2. They who ſate in *Moſes's* Chair were reſolv'd to keep their Seat; wherefore to ſecure Reverence to themſelves, they ſcatter'd amongſt the People ſuch Sayings as theſe.

That the Spirit of Wiſdom reſts not upon the Heads of Poor Men.

That the Rich and Mighty upon Earth are the Favourites of Heaven; ſo that according to their Scheme, if a Man be ſhatter'd in his Fortunes, or however brought into Poverty and Contempt, no more adoe

Pſal. 71. 11. but write upon his Doors, *Forſaken of God, take him and perſecute him, for there is none to deliver him.*

Theſe were the Men who ſtumbled at the Humility of the Meſſiah when he came amongſt 'em; for they ſaid, as it was prophe-

ſied

ſied of them, *He hath no form nor comeli-* Isa. 53. 2, 3.
neſs, and when we ſhall ſee him there is no beauty that we ſhould deſire him.

The Place of his Birth and Parentage were ſuch ſtumbling-Blocks in their way, that they ſcorn'd to receive Rules of Life, or be taught Civility and good Manners from the Carpenter's Son.

To their great *Sanhedrim*, which conſiſted of Rulers, Judges, Prieſts, and Chief of the People, they fix'd the *Shecinah*, the Divine Preſence, yea the Spirit of Judgment they ſo appropriated to themſelves, that if any would ſeek for Inſtruction, it muſt be in their Courts and Conſiſtories, and not amongſt poor *Plebeians* in the Sea-Port-Towns of *Galilee.*

This that I have ſaid, ſhews that the Inſtances of Piety and Wiſdom were rare and unfrequent in the mean and contemptible Parts of *Galilee*, but doth on no hand juſtifie the Infidelity of the *Jewiſh* Nation in rejecting the Meſſiah, that Mighty Prophet, who was born there; nor ſhould any Man of true Worth and Greatneſs, be deſpis'd in the World, purely for the Ob-

ſcurity

ſecurity of his Houſe and Family, and Place of his Birth. And this brings me to the ſecond thing I propoſe to treat of, Namely,

II. That Religion and Virtue doth Honour to a Country, and reflects a Reputation to the Place of a Man's Birth: *The Lord ſhall rehearſe it when he writes up the people, that this man was born in her.*

It was common to the *Jews*, to inroll the Names and Doings of their Worthies, in ſome publick Court of Record, that they ſhould live to Poſterity, and that Generations to come, might call them bleſſed. To this the *Pſalmiſt* alludes when he ſaith, *The Lord ſhall write up the people.*

And not unlike to this was the Uſage of the Primitive Times of Chriſtianity, who inſerted into the Dyptichs of the Church, the Martyrs and Confeſſors of the Faith; and then at the celebration of the Euchariſt recited their Virtues, with their Names and Countries.

I acknowledge no Place of it ſelf is capable of Reſpect and Honour, further than it's related to ſuch Men, whoſe Merits and glorious Atcheivements have given it Credit.

For

For what Reputation can a City or Country have more, than that it hath been the Birth-Place of ſome of the Worthies of the World, or thoſe of whom the World was not worthy?

All the Reputation of a City or Province, is, that it hath a Place in Hiſtory, that it lives in the Archieves and Regiſtry of time, that it ſhall be talk'd of with Love and Delight, and mention'd with Eſteem to the World's End; and this is the Credit good Men do to their Country, and the Place of their Birth; and upon the Score of Vertue, there's a Reſpect due to them both, if we ſhall appeal,

Firſt, To the general Senſe of Mankind; 1.
Or,

Secondly, Conſider the Natural tendency of Vertue it ſelf. 2.

Firſt. It hath been the general Opinion of Mankind, *Jews*, *Pagans*, *Turks* and *Chriſtians*; and their Practice confirms it, that there's an Honour due to ſuch who have been the Authors of any public Good to the World; their Memories they have cele- 1.

brated with Praiſe, and regiſtred the Land of their Nativity.

The antient *Jews* ever preſerv'd a great Eſteem of the Towns and Countries, Houſes and Dwellings of their Patriarchs and Prophets; *Chaldea* was celebrated for the Country of *Abraham*; and *Zoar* (tho' a little one) for the City of *Lot*'s deliverance.

Whenever they recited the Deeds of their Anceſtors, 'twas commonly after this Manner, *Let his Name be bleſſed, and his Memory abide to the Life of the World to come*: From the *Jews* it's probable was this deriv'd to the *Gentiles*, who inſtituted Feaſts to the Honour of their Gods, and held the Places in Reverence that gave them Life.

Whenever they talk of their Founders of Cities, their Reſtorers of Liberties, their Generals and Leaders of Armies, their inſpir'd Poets and Oratours, they are ſure to mention the Nation and Country whence they came, as if they lov'd the very Ground they trod, and fanſied a peculiar Generouſneſs in that Air where thoſe Heroes breath'd.

Secondly

Secondly, If we consider the Natural Tendency of Vertue, it is to eternize the Names and Countries of Men. 2.

The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance, and the glory of his house shall not be forgot. Psal. 112.6

Indeed Men may set up their Names by Villanous Actions; they may be talk'd of when they are dead, for Fools and Knaves, Tyrants, Oppressors, Murderers and Destroyers of Mankind, and of such it's said oftimes in Contempt, Loe, there was his Dwelling, the Possession of Fraud and Violence; Loe, there his Folly and the Place of his Birth; but to be buried in everlasting Obscurity, is better by far; yea, what our Saviour said to *Judas* may be applied to such, *it had been better for them if they had never been born.*

Whereas in the Works of Righteousness and Goodness, there are the Seeds of Immortality, which though depress'd will spring again with a fresh Verdure, and out live all the Pleasures of Sin, which last but a Moment; in a Word, as Vertue and

Righteousness, will embalm the Names of the Just, and make them fragrant to Posterity, so will they preserve the obscurest Parts of the Earth from Oblivion and Contempt.

True Worth and Religion will hallow a Cell, and ennoble a Cottage; when Wickedness and Wrong will make the Rafters of the most stately Structure crack, *force the very stone out of the wall to speak, and the beam out of the timber to answer it: Woe to him that builds a town with blood, and stablisheth a City by iniquity.* Yea, it will it cause to be written upon its very Portico's and Gates, The Glory of this House is departed, and like Filth and Ordure, will stick upon the Walls, though cieled with Cedar, and painted with Vermillion. So then as long as there's any Sence of true Honour and Greatness, any Difference preserv'd betwixt Good and Evil; good Men and the Place of their Birth, will live in Credit and Reputation; *For of Zion it will be said,* as long as the World stands, *This and that man was born in her, and the most high shall establish her.*

Hab. 2. 11, 12.

The

The Conſideration of what hath been ſaid, ſhou'd provoke us to a grateful Senſe of the Mercies of God, who hath caſt our Lot in a good Land, in a civiliz'd Nation, by the planting of the *Chriſtian* Faith.

We were not born of *Cannibals* and *Savages*, as many in the barbarous parts of the Earth, but of *Chriſtian* Parents, who dedicated us to God betimes; and we have been ever ſince inſtructed in the Ways of the Lord, and taught the Judgments of our God.

Take away Religion, Laws, Inſtitution of Behaviour, what a diſmal Proſpect wou'd be the Land of our Nativity? In a very little time, it is to be fear'd, we ſhou'd return to our primitive Barbarity; be as Rude in our Manners, as Idolatrous and Apiſh in our Worſhip, as our *Saxon* Progenitors were before us.

But bleſs'd be God, we have had both Place and Converſation to form our Manners aright, and conduct our Lives: Now if the *Jews* gloried in their great Towns and Cities, becauſe they had Synagogues and

and Places of Sacrifice there, we have this ground of boasting all the Nation over: Every Parish amongst us in this Sense may be call'd a * *Bethshemesh, the City of a Priest*; and every Country Village hath its Synagogue, the House of Prayer and Sacrifice; so that if we wou'd attend the Offices of Devotion with a Zeal answerable to the wise Provision the Church hath made for us, our Prayers might come before God early in the Morning when we look up; and the lifting up of our Hands wou'd be as surely accepted as the Evening Sacrifice: if we are not wanting to our selves, we may know something of Religion, and be every one taught of God from the least to the greatest: But if we will not take the Advantages God affords us for the improving and bettering our selves, we can reasonably judge no otherwise, but that as our Sins are aggravated, so our Stripes will be increas'd and multiply'd; For *he that knew his master's will and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes*; and to him that knows to do Good (or may know if he pleases) and doth it not,

*Jos. 21. 16.

not, to him it is Sin; it is Sin with a Witneſs.

However, as a Teſtimony of our Gratitude to God for the Honour of our Birth, and the Advantage of Education, let me recommend but theſe *two* things.

Firſt, To keep a warm, lively Sence of God and Religion upon your Minds, acknowledging him in all your Ways, ſo ſhall he direct your Paths. I.

To live without God in the World is our degeneracy in the higheſt Meaſure and Proportion.

To alienate our ſelves from him by wicked Works, is the worſt ſort of Sacrilege we can commit; for our reaſonable Souls are God's Peculiar, made for him, and fitted to attend upon him; fix therefore upon that as the greateſt Credit to any Nation or Country that leads us to God, and makes us moſt acceptable to him.

In the laſt Place, as a farther Teſtimony of our Gratitude, let's be ready and prepar'd II.

par'd to every good Thing, provoking one another to Love and good Works.

For in Truth, if it were not upon the Account of Friendſhip and Charity, this Day's Meeting were an unlawful Aſſembly, little better than a Rout or a Riot, in the common Senſe and Conſtruction of the Law; but Piety and Charity will ſanctifie an Aſſembly, and make your Meeting together for the better, and not for the worſe.

That therefore I wou'd leave with you (my Friends and Country-Men) is, as to promote Friendſhip and Kindneſs among your ſelves, ſo to let your poor Country-Men taſte the Effects of your Liberality and Bounty towards them.

Ye of this Society and County, without Oſtentation be it ſaid, have made the beſt improvement of theſe Feaſts of Charity of any other in the Nation beſides.

How many poor Children have been fetch'd from the Towns and Villages where ye were born, and put to honeſt Callings in this City; ſo that from being reliev'd themſelves, in a little time have been made

made capable of relieving and comforting others.

This is an excellent ſort of Charity, and the good Effects of it are conſpicuous in every Age.

How many began in this great City in as mean Circumſtances as thoſe who wear the Liveries and Badges of your Charity this Day?

And who knows but thoſe poor Children may have ſuch Seeds of Vertue in their Natures, that in a little time they may exchange their Places for yours, and be as uſeful in the times to come as you have been in the Generations before them.

For this is no Reflexion upon any Man; nay it's ſo far from it, that it is much to a Man's Credit, when his Parts and Prudence with the bleſſing of God, and not his Paternal Inheritance hath made Rich.

Abundant Examples there are of ſuch who from a ſmall Figure once, have arriv'd to the chief Magiſtracy of this City; and of others who from Schools and Hoſpitals of Religion and Learning, have in

time arriv'd to be uſeful and conſiderable Men in Church and State.

It is inglorious only to grow Great by Frauds and Perjuries, Extortion or Oppreſſion, or to thrive by any Sin: But it is no way infamous from Low Beginnings to take one's Riſe, while Sobriety and Honeſty, Diligence and Induſtry, are the Means to Advancement.

The Heathens, who made Honour a Goddeſs, however they did in that, yet did wiſely in this, that they made Vertue the Step to her Altars, and wou'd allow none for Men of Honour, who had not firſt been the Sons of Wiſdom.

We may indeed be thought to move counter to the Cuſtom of the World, if we take theſe Steps: But aſſure your ſelves, that they who take others, will find in the End that they made more haſte than good ſpeed.

Let the World judge Things as they pleaſe, yet upon this you may depend, that nothing but Religion and Piety, Juſtice and Charity will reflect a Reputation upon you

and

and your Country : For never any, I believe, whether Philoſophers or Heralds, who have treated, περὶ εὐγενείας, of Dignity of Birth, or Titles of Honour, but made Virtue a conſtitutive Part of true Greatneſs and Gentility.

The Children of God were *Zion*'s Crown and Glory : This was her boaſting, that the Servants of God were born in her.

In the Goſpel, *Bethſaida* of *Galilee* is fam'd for little elſe but the Birth-Place of *Peter*, *Andrew*, and *Philip*, the Diſciples of the Lord.

How many Towns and Villages in *Africk*, and other Parts of the Earth, of whom there's nothing remains, but that they were the Seats and Habitations of ſome Ancient Biſhops, Martyrs, and Confeſſors of the Chriſtian Faith.

Nor have the *Pagans* been backward to pay all Respect to the Birth-Place of their Worthies.

Seven Towns, we are told, contested the Honour of *Homer*'s Birth.

And when *Alexander* came against *Thebes*, sack'd the City, and sold the Citizens to the Number of Thirty Thousand, yet he remember'd poor *Pindar*'s House, and Off-Spring, and excepted them the Common Calamity, out of Respect to his Name and Memory.

Plut. in vit. Alexandri.

Tully in his Book against *Verres*, tells us, that when he, with his wicked Complices, lay'd their Sacrilegious Hands upon the Gods, and the Sacred Things of the Temple at *Delphos*; the Inhabitants were much inraged for the Sake of the Religion, and Antiquity of the Place, and adds besides, that the *Persians*, when they over-ran *Greece*, and threatned Destruction to the Gods and their

their Worſhippers, yet in the midſt of their Millitary Rage and Sanguine Zeal, ſpar'd *Delos*, becauſe 'twas the Birth-Place of *Apollo*, the God of Wiſdom and Eloquence.

Nay, on the contrary, we read how Infamous ſome Places have been, for the Sins of the Natives there.

Tire and *Sidon*, *Sodom* and *Gomorra* are ſtigmatiz'd in Sacred Hiſtory for Gluttony, and fulneſs of Bread, for their great Contempt of God and Religion.

Crete is branded for Lying and Deceit, for Inhumanity and Cruelty, *Titus* 1. 12. St. *Paul* quotes it out of one of their own Prophets (ſo they are call'd who had the Poetic Fury) *The Cretians are always lyars, evil beaſts, ſlow-bellies.*

To conclude therefore, if we have any Love of God, any Reſpect to our Native Country, any Value for the Memory of our Friends, Let's reſolve to devote our ſelves

ſelves to the Service of God, and to ſerve one another by Love.

And now ſince we are returning to the Amicable Enjoyment one of another, in the Houſe of Feaſting, let there be no Spots in your Feaſts of Love, let Charity be the chief Steward, and Sobriety the Ornament of your Gueſts: Then that Saying of the Preacher may take Place, *Eccleſiaſtes* 9. 7, 8. *Let thy garments be always white, and let thy head lack no ointment.*

Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God accepts thy work.

FINIS.